

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 – 113 (previously canceled)

Claims 114 – 123 (canceled)

Claim 124 (currently amended)

A wheel, comprising:

a peripheral wheel rim;

a central hub with a central axle and an outer flange;

a plurality of pretensioned spokes extending between the rim and hub, wherein said spokes have a first portion connected to said rim and a second portion opposed to said first portion and connected to said hub, further comprising means for adjusting tension in the plurality of pretensioned spokes; and

a cavity formed within at least one of said outer flange and said rim for connection with at least one of said spokes,

wherein at least one of said first portion and said second portion of said spoke is joined to at least one of said outer flange and said rim by means of a deformed engagement in a deformed engagement region, said cavity surrounding and enclosing the cross section of said spoke at said deformed engagement region; and

wherein said deformed engagement results in a firm connection to resist relative movement between said cavity and at least one of said first portion of said spoke at said engagement region.

Claim 125 (previously presented)

A wheel according to claim 124, wherein said spoke includes a non-circular cross-section portion located within said deformed engagement region to limit rotation of said spoke relative to said cavity.

Claim 126 (previously presented)

A wheel according to claim 124, wherein said at least one of said outer flange and said rim includes raised external geometry adjacent said cavity to at least one of locally extend and locally support said deformed engagement region.

Claim 127 (canceled)

Claim 128 (currently amended)

The wheel of claim 124, wherein the engagement region includes contact between said at least one spoke and said cavity around the full cross-sectional perimeter of said spoke.

Claim 129 (currently amended)

The wheel of claim 124, wherein the cavity is in a polymeric element.

Claim 130 (currently amended)

The wheel of claim 129₁ wherein said spoke is threaded in said deformed engagement region.

Claim 131 (canceled)

Claims 132 – 192 (canceled)

Claim 193 (new)

A wheel comprising:

a peripheral wheel rim;

a central hub with a central axle and an outer flange;

a plurality of pretensioned spokes extending between the rim and hub, wherein said spokes have a first portion connected to said rim and a second portion opposed to said first portion and connected to said hub; and

a cavity formed within at least one of said outer flange and said rim for connection with at least one of said spokes, wherein the cavity is oriented axially and the spoke includes a bent region.

wherein at least one of said first portion and said second portion of said spoke is joined to at least one of said outer flange and said rim by means of a deformed engagement in a deformed engagement region, said cavity surrounding and enclosing the cross-section of said spoke at said deformed engagement region; and

wherein said deformed engagement results in a connection to resist relative movement between said cavity and at least one of said first portion and said second portion of said spoke at said engagement region.